

THE SPIDER AND THE POULTERER : A YARN OF THE SPUN

'Twas afternoon, and yet it seemed
As if the sun were down ;
The streets were up, the fog was thick
The mud was black and brown—
And this was odd, you know, because
It was in London town.

The Spider and the Poulterer
Were walking, near the Strand ;
They groaned, like anything, to think
Of what they had in hand.
“ If this were only Friday week,”
They said, “ it would be grand.”

“ With papers marked a 9 or 8,
Under our system new,
Do you suppose,” said Section X,
“ That more will wriggle through ? ”
“ I doubt it much,” said Section V,
“ We'll see,” said Section U.

And Section I just heaved a sigh
And sadly shook his head,
He gravely feared that any change
Would work for pluck instead—
Tho' Section Y thought otherwise,
And so did Section Z.

Now, let the candidates come up,
The Sections did beseech
And let us hear if they know all
The things we love to teach :
Ten minutes is the time prescribed
For us to give to each.

Obedient to the raucous call,
In line the numbers fell ;
And some were neat and some were not,
And some looked far from well ;
Few deemed their lot quite Heavenly ;
Some thought it simply Hell.

“ Our tips,” they said, “ we've clean forgot
We scarce know what we're at,
We feel as if down in our boots,
Our hearts go pit-a-pat—”
“ Be seated, pray,” said Section J,
And thereupon, they sat.

“ The time has come,” said Section X,
“ To talk on many points,
On Cataracts—and gangrenes rare—
And Nerve supply to joints—
And what a rump-fed ronyon does
When he—or she—aroynts.”

“ Great Scott ! ” the candidate remarked,
And turned from green to blue,
“ The Crammer said we'd never have
That sort of thing to do—”
“ We thank you much ! ” said Section X,
And put him down a 2.

Some simple questions 9—0—2
Completely seemed to floor ;
When shown an obvious Mandible,
He called it Lower Jaw.
And 9—0—3 was just as bad,
Still worse was 9—0—4.

A melanotic growth he missed,
Though black as river barge—
A hydrocele he failed to spot—
He'd tap a hernia large—
He'd treat a plump lipoma with
Pot : Iod : c Hydrarg :

“ We feel for you,” said Section Y,
“ We deeply sympathise ” :
But all the Sections marked him down
Noughts, of the largest size :
And then, for various reasons, asked
Him questions on the eyes.

It may be right, but still it seems
They cannot do the trick ;
A bare pass mark is all they get
Unless they're smart and quick,
Well, really, now, said Section Y
It *is* a leetle thick.

“ Now, Gentlemen, unto your names
Pray answer, when I call ”—
For sole response a dismal wail
Rose echoing from the Hall—
And this was scarcely odd, because
They'd plucked them, one and all.

CLINTON THOMAS DENT
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